



Week 4 Assignment

Demonstrating Continuous Improvement

This week, you should:

- demonstrate knowledge of the TEA learning system, data-based decision-making learner-centered instruction, and campus improvement planning by finalizing the agenda for a learner-centered staff development session on an identified campus need.
- demonstrate an understanding of ongoing, continuous improvement by revising a staff development session on an identified campus need.
- create an action plan to improve local school district or campus performance on a component of the TEA learning system.

Rubric

Use the following rubric to guide your work.

Tasks ↓	Accomplished	Proficient	Unacceptable
Part 1: Learner-Centered Staff Development	Demonstrates the ability to work collaboratively online with 2 colleagues to improve a learner-centered staff development, and reflects intuitively on the process. (4 points)	Works collaboratively online with 1 colleague to improve a learner-centered staff development, and reflects on the process. (2 points)	Does not work collaboratively to improve a learner-centered staff development or reflection the process. (0 points)
Part 2: TEA Learning System: Action Plan	Effectively creates an action plan to improve local school district or campus performance on a component of the TEA learning system, seeks and applies feedback from a colleague, and reflects intuitively on the process. (5 points)	Creates an action plan to improve local school district or campus performance on a component of the TEA learning system, seeks feedback from a colleague, and reflects on the process. (3 points)	Does not create an action plan to improve local school district or campus performance on a component of the TEA learning system, seek feedback from a colleague, or reflects on the process. (0 points)
Mechanics	Responses are well written and relevant or show some relevance to content of course module. Few or no errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation. (1 point)		Responses lack clarity and depth and/or multiple errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation. (0 points)

Week 4 Assignment: Application Assignment Finalizing Course Assignments

For a campus to make lasting change, school improvement must be an ongoing, continuous process. You will demonstrate your understanding of continuous improvement by (1) modifying the agenda for learner-centered staff development and (2) creating an action plan for an area of improvement that you identified on the local provisions of the TEA learning system.

Part 1: Learner-Centered Staff Development**Directions:**

Work cooperatively online with two of your colleagues to revise and finalize the agenda for your learner-centered staff development.

Reflect on the modification(s) by answering the guiding questions.

Session Purpose: To identify and address deficits in instruction that led to the underperformance of the Economically Disadvantaged and Hispanic sub-populations in 2007 as evidenced on the AEIS Report for TAKS Mathematics, Grades 7 & 8 at LVJHS				
Learning Objective to Be Addressed: TEA Learning System GOAL 2: The students in the public education system will demonstrate exemplary performance in the understanding of mathematics; and as required by the State Board of Education (Chapter 28, section 28.001 of Education Code), the instructional program should prepare students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in all subject areas (which include being able to read, write, compute, problem solve, think critically, apply technology, and communicate).				
Collaborator # 1: Tina Cone			Collaborator #2: Elizabeth Pressler	
Grade Level: 6-8 Math	Facilitator: Allen Bordelon	Location: LVJHS Cafeteria	Start Time: 10:45am	End-Time: 11:30am
Learner-Centered Activity	Purpose	Description	Steps	Estimated Time
AEIS Data Analysis: How did our students perform? (Standards and Assessment)	Derive a data-driven snapshot of how our students performed based on analysis of AEIS TAKS performance data	Guided data analysis; groundwork for consensus building to get them to understand that we are leaving students behind.	Break into cohorts by grade level; distribute AEIS data; assign each cohort to analyze and discuss the performance data for all students in their grade range and for all sub-groups, e.g. Economically Disadvantaged, Hispanic, etc. A representative from each cohort will present their findings to the group.	10:45am 10 minutes duration

<p>CIP Analysis: What are our CIP performance goals for all students? (Standards and Assessment)</p>	<p>Derive a data-driven picture of what our CIP goals and standards are regarding instruction and student performance.</p>	<p>Guided data analysis; groundwork for consensus building to get them to understand that we are not adequately following our CIP.</p>	<p>Distribute copies of LVJHS CIP to each cohort; assign each cohort to analyze and discuss the CIP guidelines, particularly those that pertain to LVJHS Mathematics for their grade level. A representative from each cohort will present their findings to the group at the end of the activity.</p>	<p>10:55am 10 minutes duration</p>
<p>Guided Discussion: In what areas are we strongest?</p>	<p>Reach consensus on what we believe we are best at teaching our students.</p>	<p>Guided discussion and brainstorming session for consensus building.</p>	<p>Cohorts will be guided in a brief brainstorming discussion using a digital whiteboard to reach consensus on what we are doing best to support all students.</p>	<p>11:05am 5 minutes duration</p>
<p>Guided Discussion: In what areas are we weakest?</p>	<p>Reach consensus on what we believe we are not doing for our students.</p>	<p>Guided discussion and brainstorming session for consensus building.</p>	<p>Cohorts will be guided in a brief brainstorming discussion using a digital whiteboard to reach consensus on what we are not doing well that is hurting students.</p>	<p>11:10am 5 minutes duration</p>

Putting it All Together to Leave No Child Behind (Construction of Knowledge and Strategic Thinking)	Teachers present ideas to make 6-8 th grade Math more relevant for our students by addressing the Construction of Knowledge and Strategic Thinking learning principles for <u>all</u> students despite their diverse learning styles.	Guided discussion and consensus building session to first determine and then implement a course of action to remedy any deficit in Math instruction.	Quickly recap where the data showed our weaknesses lie; which CIP objectives we agreed we were not meeting; what we agreed were our strengths; and what we agreed were our greatest needs or deficits. Open the floor for guided discussion using the digital whiteboard, soliciting from each member of each cohort a suggestion for a learning activity or a change to an existing learning activity to address one of their identified areas of need; when each member has contributed, let each cohort as a group choose five of the suggested learning activities to be implemented in their classrooms to address the identified needs. End the session by ensuring all teachers understand they will now be accountable for employing these mutually-agreed-upon activities, with the clear expectation of improved achievement on the next AEIS report. Dismiss teachers.	11:15am 15 minutes duration Dismiss at 11:30am
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Evaluation	Evaluation of staff development.	Evaluation of staff development.	Email workshop evaluation form to teachers and analyze responses to improve future staff development.	<i>Outside of session window – Day of session - 30 minutes duration</i>
Follow-up	Follow-up on staff development.	Follow-up formative evaluation on staff development.	Email follow-up formative evaluation questionnaire to teachers to evaluate what long-term benefits they have derived from the workshop, and to gather information to fine-tune future sessions of the workshop.	<i>Twice outside of session window – 10 school days later and again 30 school days later - 30-45 minutes duration each time</i>

How did you modify the staff development agenda? Why did you make the modifications? How do you anticipate that the modification(s) will improve the staff development?

After receiving input during the collaboration, I maximized staff development time by emailing the evaluation forms to the participating teachers after the completion of the workshop, on the same day as the workshop. I also made evaluation of the workshop ongoing by emailing a formative evaluation questionnaire to teachers on two different occasions, first ten school days after completion of the session, and again thirty school days after completion of the session as ongoing evaluation is part of the learner-centered concept.

The modification of emailing the evaluation form saves valuable workshop time for me to direct to more effective processes, and also makes sure I am accommodating the next presenter as it minimizes stragglers hanging around my session to hurriedly finish their evaluation. The more relaxed evaluation permitted by email also encourages my participants to reflect and include comments that might be left off in the time crunch of the typical evaluation window.

The ongoing formative evaluation modification will improve future sessions of this workshop as it will gather formative feedback information to be used to fine-tune and modify workshop activities, and it will impress upon teachers that they are to continue applying the lessons learned in this workshop in their classrooms on an ongoing basis. In addition the data gathered will be used during school improvement initiatives. The final improvement is that ongoing evaluation is part of the learner-centered concept, and thus makes this staff development more learner-centric than it was before the modification.

Part 2: TEA Learning System: Action Plan

Directions:

Review the TEA learning system chart that you completed in Part 1 of the Analysis Assignment.

Based on your learning during Weeks 2 - 4, revise the improvement ideas in the chart.

Select an area of improvement from the chart. Complete the action plan for the improvement initiative:

- Tasks/action steps
- Responsibilities
- Resources
- Timeline
- Staff development
- Monitoring
- Evaluation

Collaborate online with a colleague to obtain feedback on your action plan.

TEA Learning System Component: Instructional Program					
Improvement Goal: Students need to learn through understanding rather than memorization in order to successfully comprehend and find value in the course content.					
Collaborator: Tina Cone					
Tasks/ Action Steps <i>What will be done?</i>	Responsibilities <i>Who will do it?</i>	Resources <i>What funds, time, people, and materials are needed?</i>	Timeline <i>By when (day/month)?</i>	Monitoring <i>How will you gauge progress toward the goal?</i>	Evaluation <i>How will success be determined?</i>
At the beginning of each LVJHS Math class on Tuesdays and Thursdays, each Math Teacher will spend 10 minutes on activities designed to increase cognition and metacognitive functioning, followed by a 10 minute interactive group problem-solving activity.	LVJHS Math Classroom teachers	Funds: No additional funds required. Time: 20 minutes at the start of Math class each Tuesday and Thursday. People: Math Teachers. Materials: Teacher netbook computer, digital projector, Mimio digital whiteboard, Internet Access, McDougal Littell Math Course Teacher Edition	Every Tuesday and Thursday except during TAKS testing windows.	Benchmark testing data, scores on interactive math problem solving drills, class and homework assignment scores, TAKS test scores.	Success will be determined by increased performance on interactive math problem solving drills, improvement in benchmark testing data from first quarter to third quarter, improvement in class and homework assignment scores, and by increases in TAKS scores from previous year, particularly in areas of the test related to problem solving abilities.

Learner-Centered Staff Development Plan: Putting it All Together to Leave No Child Behind (Construction of Knowledge and Strategic Thinking)

Briefly describe.

Teachers participate in groups in a guided discussion presenting ideas to make 6-8th grade Math more relevant for our students by addressing the Construction of Knowledge and Strategic Thinking learning principles for all students regardless of their diverse learning styles and backgrounds. Campus improvement depends upon shifting teaching practices away from rote memorization towards classroom practices which will increase student skills in the construction of knowledge and strategic thinking ability. During the staff development session the teachers will reach consensus to identify, plan and then implement a course of action based on the needs and learning styles of their students to increase cognition and metacognitive function, thereby improving Mathematics instruction while increasing learner involvement.

Reflections on Collaboration and Improvement

What change did you make in the action plan as a result of the feedback from a colleague?

The feedback from my online colleague caused me to focus more on changing the way the students learn by altering what the teachers teach. Particularly in Mathematics, as my colleague pointed out, teachers have traditionally focused on memorization techniques and sometimes spend an inordinate amount of time trying to get students to memorize facts, tables and algorithms. Although some memorization will always be necessary in order to calculate and comprehend, cognition and metacognitive skills, that is, the ability to construct knowledge and to think strategically, enhance a student's problem solving abilities by giving them the tools to think their way through problems rather than depending upon memorized facts and formulas, and then floundering when the problem presented cannot be solved using only their stored knowledge.

Without the collaboration it would have been my tendency to focus on how the teachers teach rather than what skills they teach the students. I now realize after all that we have learned in this course that we must focus on both the "what" of the curriculum and the "how" in concert to truly create a learner-centered environment for all our students. Teaching these cognitive and metacognitive skills also helps increase equity for all our sub-populations of students as it does not depend on the amount of stored knowledge they have acquired through memorization, and can foster collaboration in the classroom between diverse learners, regardless of their background or economic status.

How does collaboration enhance improvement efforts? What new ideas emerged as a result of the collaborative effort?

Although there is always the possibility of having people in a collaborative group whose viewpoints are diametrically opposed, the group management skills and activities from the readings and lecture provide positive methods to control discord and channel it into a positive force for change. Collaboration enhances improvement issues initially by helping reach a common understanding of the need to be addressed or the task at hand; it is easy for an individual to interpret a need based on their own predetermined ideas or their unique point of view, but by openly discussing issues during the collaborative process, the picture becomes clearer. This assignment is a good example; I initially had a different interpretation of what was expected until the collaboration began, then I saw things from a different point of view and the issue became clearer. Another advantage of collaboration enhancing improvement efforts is by using the power of the group to support improvement; if a group has reached consensus and multiple individuals from different levels all support change and improvement, it is much easier to gain additional support than if were the lone voice for improvement; momentum is introduced when we collaborate.

One great new idea that emerged from the collaborative effort was using technology to improve the evaluation and feedback process during staff development sessions; I had initially planned to pass out evaluations during meetings, but it was pointed out that online evaluations submitted outside the staff development window would allow more time for meeting activities. I was also introduced to new and innovative ways to assign teachers to groups for use in other workshops by using playing cards to make the process more random and add an element of fun.

Why must campus improvement be ongoing and continuous?

Campus improvement must be ongoing and continuous as the conditions are in a constant state of flux. Just because the 6th graders were great at reading this year and aced the TAKS has no bearing on how next year's class will perform, and even with those same students, a change of staff throwing different teachers with different personalities and levels of experience into the mix can change outcomes in short order.

Other changes that require an ongoing and continual improvement process include changes in funding, changes in State mandates, changes to laws governing education, changes in leadership, and even changes in the makeup of a community which in turn changes the expectations of society for that school.

From the Campus Improvement Plan standpoint, constant data must be gathered to determine the effectiveness of improvement initiatives as well as to fine-tune the existing initiatives, delete initiatives which no longer fulfill a purpose or have achieved the desired outcome, or to add new initiatives to effect change in response to ever-changing needs, demands and resources.